

Edwards, Lila: Great-Granddaddy Sang "Amazing Grace" ^[1]

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Lila Edwards: Great-Granddaddy Sang "Amazing Grace"

by David Cecelski. "[Listening to History](#) ^[2]," *News & Observer*. Published 9/8/2002. Copyrighted. Reprinted with permission.

I visited with 97-year-old Lila Edwards at her home in Louisburg, 25 miles northeast of Raleigh in [Franklin County](#) ^[3]. She laughed often and relished telling old stories of whimsy and folly, as if it were humanity's comic side that stood out most to her as she looked back over nearly a century of life. We both laughed when she told me how merely a taste of brown sugar or a trip to town was once a special occasion. We couldn't help but think what a different world we live in now. The whole day brought Louisburg to life for me. Along with my children, I explored the town's wonderful flea market, toured Louisburg College's art museum, and picked bucketfuls of strawberries at a nearby farm. But what I will always remember best about Louisburg are Mrs. Edwards' tales of raucous horse traders, an old man singing "Amazing Grace" to a millpond, and a child buried at night during the great influenza epidemic of 1918-19.



Lila Edwards. Photo by Chris Seward, 2002. ~~The copyright is reserved for further use or to purchase a print, please contact the News & Observer.~~

I was in the Great Depression, but to me that doesn't seem like it's been so long ago, not like back when I was a child. I was born Oct. 12, 1905, in a little place called Inez, in Warren County. My father and my mother were just country people. My father had 2 or 3 mules or horses, a cow, calves and all, and we grew a lot of our food and divided with our neighbors. That was one thing that helped us get by. One family had something and the others had something else, and we divide. My great-granddaddy built a dam over a branch once. You've heard of folks drinking? (She laughs.) Well, my great-granddaddy drank. He was 102 when he died, but they say that he got up there on that dam when he got real old and sang "Amazing Grace". When she was young, the farm economy was still based on draft animals, not the gasoline engine, and towns like Louisburg crowded with horse and mule traders every fall. A long time ago, people in the fall of the year, they had money from selling cotton and tobacco. They'd come to Louisburg and trade horses and stay three or four days and nights. And drank, I reckon. And played cards too, I reckon. Well, one time they didn't come into town so often. They'd come in to sell tobacco and cotton. In the fall, we'd have a little bit more to come and buy material for a dress and to buy sugar, stuff like that. I remember one thing that my daddy used to bring us was a whole lot of horse and buggy, and one buggy wasn't enough to take us all to church. There was a whole lot of us, and some would go in the buggy and some would walk. One night we got about halfway home and the baby - I always feared God. That's the main reason I'm living, I guess. I had six brothers and two sisters, a big family. I'm the only one left. It makes me feel funny. Lonesome. Nobody's left that even remembers the place that I grew up, because I do.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina :
Lila Edwards lived from Oct. 12, 1905 - May 27, 2006.

U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014, Ancestry Library edition. Accessed 2/13/2016.

Subjects:

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Origin - location:

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Years:

Oct. 12, 1905 - May 27, 2006

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